

October 26, 2017  
www.mbc.org

# THE Baptist Record

Vol. 141  
No. 42

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

## BRIEFS

### MESSENGERS AGREE ON BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS

RANDOLPH, N.J. (BP) — Messengers to the Baptist Convention of New York (BCNY) annual meeting Sept. 24-25 at Bible Church International in Randolph, N.J., unanimously amended the convention's constitution to affirm the biblical definitions of marriage and gender. A total of 94 messengers attended from 61 of the 496 churches that cooperate with BCNY. The convention's constitution previously stated that churches are not in cooperation with the convention if they affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior, a statement that remains in the constitution.

### MUSLIM EXTREMISTS SLAY 21 CHRISTIANS

WASHINGTON, DC (BVA) — Twenty Baptists and one Methodist were killed by Muslim extremist Fulani herdsmen on September 9 in Plateau State in Nigeria, according to Baptist World Alliance. "All the 20 Baptists killed came from the same local village church," said Samson Ayokunle, president and CEO of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. "Up till now, our government has not arrested any of the criminals who perpetrated the dastardly act. They appear to be above the law." He said the "government's failure to arrest them is simply seen by reasonable people as complicity."

### BRUNSON, LAMBERT TO CO-PASTOR FBC JVILLE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP) — Mrc Brunson has been joined by Heath Lambert as senior pastors of First Church in Jacksonville, FL. Brunson, 60, has been the 10,000-member church's senior pastor since 2006. Lambert, 38, associate professor of biblical counseling at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., has been the church's associate pastor since January 2016. He also serves as executive director of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, with certified members in 18 countries, and is a founding board member of the Biblical Counseling Coalition.



**CLEANING UP** — Stan Aycock, disaster relief leader for Jackson County Association in Pascagoula, mans a tractor to help move debris to the street curb for pickup at a home in Orange, Texas. Aycock, member of First Church, Gautier, is one of the Mississippi Baptists who answered the call to help victims of Hurricane Harvey in the Orange area just west of the border with Louisiana. (BR photo courtesy of John Watson)

## Disaster Relief settling in for long haul

### Two months after hurricanes, Miss. Baptists still on scene

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Mississippi Baptists are still in the thick of hurricane disaster response after nearly two months of continuous deployment — and there's plenty more to come.

"Mississippi Baptists have worked tirelessly since Hurricane Harvey made landfall in Texas on August 25 and Hurricane Irma hit Florida on Sept.

10," said Don Gann, Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief (MBDR) coordinator and director of men's ministry for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson. The numbers are impressive, Gann reported. According to an Oct. 19 report (the latest available), MBDR's work in Orange, Texas, where they are headquartered, has resulted in 393 completed jobs. That includes

such work as mud-out, where homes are cleared of the flood's muck and stripped of destroyed items; chainsaw crews; debris removal; and other activities. In addition, 6,514 meals have been prepared by MBDR volunteers using mobile kitchens provided by Texas churches and the Texas state Baptist conventions, Gann said.

see RELIEF on p. 7

## Fellowship Hall total loss at Edon Church



Edon Church on Jasper County Road 7 outside Stringer was heavily damaged Sept. 23 by a fire of undetermined origin. According to pastor John Davis, the church's fellowship hall burned but the other buildings on the church's property were saved. Davis said no one was injured, and the damage is covered by insurance. Bay Springs and Stringer Fire Departments responded to the blaze. (BR photo by Barri A. Shirley)

2000 MAY 11 0208P  
8000 2011 0208P  
5824 PT  
005 DTM  
SOUTHERN BAPT HISTORICAL SOC  
901 COMMERCE ST STE 401  
NASHVILLE TN 37203-3620



## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS



### MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

October 31 - November 1, 2017 • FBC, Jackson

## Our blessed unity

**M**ississippi Baptists will gather that week in Jackson for their annual meeting to praise the Lord, attend to the business of the convention, connect with old friends and former co-workers, find out what a new in state ministries, and — did I mention this already? — praise the Lord.

That's where the focus of the meeting will be, because praising the Lord is what Mississippi Baptists do best when they get together. There may indeed be issues that pit one brother against another in debate on the floor of the convention. That's sure to be lively. There may be disagreements over all sorts of issues but if Mississippi Baptists remain true to form, there will not be disunity. The issues will be heard and acted upon, and the body of churches known as the Mississippi Baptist Convention will move forward to the honor and glory of God.

It's been that way for a long time, because Mississippi Baptists obviously have great respect for one another and an unshakable faith in each other. That's evident at each annual meeting of the convention. Like most organizations the size of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (more than 2,100 churches), there are many viewpoints on the present and future direction of the convention. Those viewpoints, and the people who express them, should be treated fairly and diplomatically, free of suspicion, insult, accusation, and personal attack. In other words, like a Christian brother.

Mississippi Baptists really should see for themselves how fortunate we are to be so unified, and

how blessed we are by that unity. It's not that way in all state Baptist conventions. It's not unusual for a Mississippi Baptist Convention Board employee attending an out-of-state meeting to be asked by a weary employee of a sister state convention, "So, what are Baptists fighting about in your state?"

Every Mississippi Baptist should take the time to serve as a messenger from his/her church. Every church in the convention should be represented by messengers to the annual meeting. Unlike many Christian denominations where an unapproachable ecclesiastical hierarchy hands down edicts from on high, leadership of the Mississippi Baptist Convention is entrusted to the churches through the messengers they dispatch to Jackson each year.

Under our system of polity, the churches oversee the convention — not the other way around. Non-Baptists always seem to be surprised by that fact. It's a wonderful system of governance that has served us well in Mississippi for 193 years.

Every Mississippi Baptist should see it for themselves. Talk with your pastor about representing your church as a messenger to the 2017 annual meeting to be held at First Church, Jackson. If your pastor isn't sure how to accomplish that, ask him to call toll free (800) 748-1651, ext. 201, to find out.

That way, when we are asked the inevitable question, "What are Baptists fighting about in your state?" your response will be, "The only fight in our state is the one to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus."

Could there be a better answer?

## Value Comes from God

**T**o Southern Baptist ministers, wives, and their families, Pastor Appreciation Month each October is a joyful time. Although it's nice to be loved and appreciated, you will not always hear these things from those you serve and serve alongside. That doesn't make those words any less true.

We need to be mindful that our significance comes from the Lord and what He says about us (1 Cor. 1:31). Hear this from my heart — You are valued. You are needed. You are on mission wherever you are and however that looks. You are important to God's plan. You are full of purpose. You are special.

If you forget these words from God, you will search for them in people who may not be able to give them to you. You will seek affection and even close friendships, but as you long to be watered by small drops or an occasional shower by other people, deep down you will feel dry.

We are sometimes naturally energized by the sweet people with whom we work, but God never intended for those people to take His place or to fill us up.

Fellowship isn't a substitute for time with our Father. It's just not possible. He is our source.

There have been times that I have been like one of those dry, almost crunchy petunias at the end of summer, with just a bit of color left. Those may have been seasons when I allowed something or someone else to try to give me the spiritual nourishment I needed. It could have been something that caught my attention, good or bad, and I didn't even realize what was or wasn't happening at the time.

On the other hand, those dry petunia kind of seasons could have been allowed by the Lord to pull me into Him a little closer, and for that I have respect for such times.

Whatever the cause, I'm reminded of God's words in Jeremiah 29:13-14: "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity...."

Like Jeremiah, there are times when we've had to minister to people who weren't very good listeners, when it felt like a struggle to lead anything of spiritual value because, frankly, few wanted to



### Guest opinion with Wendy Baker

follow. If you've been there — or are there now — know that "blessed is the one who takes refuge in Him" (Psalm 34:8).

And this: "Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10).

The faithful servant and prophet Jeremiah painted this beautiful word picture in chapter 17, verses 7-8. I'm praying this for all of us: "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit."

Be encouraged, dear one. God hears. He knows all about it. He has a purpose for you. Whether you're on a mountaintop or trudging through thorny thickets below: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Pastor Appreciation Month may find you with abundant happiness or it may find you feeling dry and despondent. Whatever season you're in, keep your eyes on Jesus. Draw water from the only One who can give you what you need to grow strong in Him. The blessings might not be what you think, but they are headed your way.

*Baker is secretary at the Horner Homemaking House at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth. She and her husband Jonathan are parents to five children. Her column first appeared at [biblicalwoman.com](http://biblicalwoman.com), and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and length.*

## THE Baptist Record

**Editor**  
William H. Perkins Jr.  
[wperkins@mbcb.org](mailto:wperkins@mbcb.org)

**Associate Editor**  
Tony Martin  
[martin@mbcb.org](mailto:martin@mbcb.org)

**Layout/Design**  
Megan Young  
[myoung@mbcb.org](mailto:myoung@mbcb.org)

**Advertising**  
Dana Richardson  
[drichardson@mbcb.org](mailto:drichardson@mbcb.org)

**Circulation Manager**  
Amy Massey  
[amassey@mbcb.org](mailto:amassey@mbcb.org)

**Baptist Record  
Advisory Committee:**  
Whit Lewis, New Albany  
Derrick Wilson, Kosciusko  
Carolyn Reeves, Oxford  
Garland Boyd, Brookhaven  
Lucy Stringer, Foxworth  
Don Hicks, Bay Springs

**Postmaster:**  
Send changes of address to: The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

**Send news, communication, and address changes to:** The Editor, Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530

**Tel:** (601) 968-3800  
**Fax:** (601) 292-3330  
**E-mail:** [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org)

### BAPTISTS

VOLUME 141 • NUMBER 42 • ISSN-0005-5778

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$11.99 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for compensating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadline: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.





**GOING, GOING ...** — The Ten Commandments monument in a display of U.S. history on the lawn of the Bloomfield, N.M. City Hall, will have to be removed. The U.S. Supreme Court declined Oct. 16 to hear the city's appeal of a lower court ruling ordering its removal. (Facebook photo)

## Supreme Court passes on Ten Commandments appeal

**WASHINGTON (BP)** — The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to review whether the display of religion-related monuments on government property is against the law.

The high court on Oct. 16 declined without explanation to hear an appeal of a lower court ruling against a Ten Commandments monument outside the Bloomfield, N.M., City Hall. In lower courts, two Wiccan witches represented by the American Civil Liberties Union successfully (ACLU) challenged the five-foot monument, complaining that it constitutes the government's establishment of religion.

The last time the Supreme Court ruled on a similar case in 2005, justices said in a 5-4 decision that a granite monument on the lawn of the Texas state capitol in Austin was constitutional. Baptist Press reported in December 2005.

That same year, the high court ruled 5-4 that the posting of the Ten Commandments inside Kentucky courthouses in McCreary and Pulaski counties was unconstitutional.

The Bloomfield monument had stood since 2011 as part of a city beautification program that allows private citizens to fund and erect historical monuments on a designated portion of the City Hall lawn, said Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Bloomfield's attorneys, said at [adff.org](http://adff.org).

Monuments honoring the Declaration of Independence, the Get-

tysburg Address and the Bill of Rights, are also displayed on the City Hall lawn, along with names of donors who funded the displays.

Religion was not a consideration in choosing to display any of the monuments, Bloomfield City Manager Eric Strahl told Baptist Press on Oct. 17. "The monuments went there originally because they were of a historical significance, and since Christianity did play such a big part in the formation and the development of the country, one of the monuments was the Ten Commandments.

"It was a determination, based on the formation of the country and the city, to place the Ten Commandments there, and as far as the city is concerned, it wasn't a religious issue."

The Bloomfield City Council was scheduled to discuss what to do with the monument in executive session during its regularly scheduled meeting on Oct. 23, Strahl told Baptist Press. "I'm not sure what decision the City Council will ultimately make but I think they'll be looking at relocating it to a piece of private property, [which] is one option."

The city will likely coordinate with the community group that funded the monument in deciding where to place it, he said, and may also decide whether to relocate all of the monuments to the same location.

The Supreme Court's 2005 decision regarding Texas made it clear that stone monuments

such as the one in Bloomfield are constitutional, ADF said. Rather, several subsequent and contrary lower court rulings have created confusion by "erroneously... giving standing for so-called offended observers — plaintiffs who allege no more than 'being exposed to a state symbol that offends his belief,'" the ADF said, quoting Bloomfield's appeal in the case.

ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman said Oct. 16 that hopefully the court will take advantage of future opportunities to clarify the law and discourage improper interpretations. "Americans shouldn't be forced to censor religion's role in history simply to appease someone who is offended by it or who has a political agenda to remove all traces of religion from the public square."

"In this case, the U.S. Supreme Court had the opportunity to affirm, as it recently did, that 'an Establishment Clause violation is not made out any time a person experiences a sense of affront from the expression of contrary religious views. We hope the court will take advantage of a future case to resolve the confusion that reigns in the lower courts on this issue.'"

ADF said that by August twenty-three states, 24 members of the U.S. Congress, various legal experts, religious groups, and others had filed briefs supporting the Bloomfield City Council and encouraging the high court to hear the case, *Bloomfield v. Felix*.

## Almost a month later, church still mourns Vegas shooting victim

**FRANKLIN, Tn. (BP)** — A small west Tennessee Baptist church continues to feel the blow of the Oct. 1 mass shooting in Las Vegas. Native son Sonny Melton, 29, who grew up in Big Sandy and attended Ramble Creek Church, was killed when he was struck by gunfire while shielding his wife, Heather Melton.

"It's rocked this whole community," said Jim Twilbeck, director of missions for the Western District Association. "It's not that big and everybody knows everybody. Everybody knew Sonny. Everybody thought a whole lot of him."

Melton attended Ramble Creek Church while growing up and before leaving for Union University, a Baptist-affiliated school in Jackson, Tn., where he completed his bachelor of science in nursing accelerated (BSNA) degree and served as president of his BSNA class.

He was employed at Henry County Medical Center (HCMC) in Paris, Tn.

"The Union University School of Nursing is in shock today, as we learned of the tragic death of Sonny Melton," said dean Kelly Harden. "Our hearts are broken for his family, friends, and colleagues. Sonny was energetic, enthusiastic and had a positive attitude that was infectious."

"He had a love for people, and was a natural choice for class president. You could not help but smile when you saw him, whether that was in class or taking care of patients. Nursing was his calling, and he served well as the hands and feet of Jesus."

"We are all better for having known him. Even

"We are all better for having known him. Even as we grieve his passing, we rejoice in the fact that in Christ we have victory over death."

**Kelly Harden**

**Union University  
School of Nursing dean**

as we grieve his passing, we rejoice in the fact that in Christ we have victory over death."

Heather Melton is from Paris and is an orthopedic surgeon at HCMC. The couple had been married a little more than a year and were in the process of building a house on Kentucky Lake.

In a statement, she reportedly told Fox News that she was "in complete disbelief and despair," adding, "Sonny was the most kind-hearted, loving man I have ever met. He saved my life and lost his."

Kelley Brewer, longtime deacon and former music leader at Ramble Creek Church, said Sonny Melton's mother Susan now leads music and his grandmother is a member there.

"We're just a small congregation of about 45," Brewer said. "Sonny was a local boy who was a good kid and grew up and did pretty well for himself. Living in a small town you never expect anything like this to happen around here, and it's shocking to hear about something like this happening to one of your own so far from home."



**MELTONS**

The whole process has been going on for a while and no doubt will continue, since it has become in some ways the official policy of many folks who are involved in government or educational institutions and, sadly, even in the church. The dumbing down of America is an idea whose time should not have ever come. I call it the dumbing down of America because for some years it has become apparent that instead of challenging people to rise to excellence, we would prefer just to have a level of mediocrity or below to which people can aspire.

It's not the effort to get good grades or high grades. It is the effort to just let everybody be involved in a lower standard. There seems to be in the thought process that something is wrong with either the material or the grading system and so the result is we just lower the standards so that everyone can come up to a level of achievement.

I would quickly confess that there have been points in my life when it would have sounded very appealing to me that we lower the standards. Maybe so that 50 on a test score would be an A. That would have suited me fine when I was in the seventh grade, but I would add it is good to grow out of that phase of life. I would not have appreciated the long-term impact of such tin-wisdom. Designing curriculum for the lowest common denominator does not serve society well or help the individual at all.

It is a crazy standard by which students can do less, know less, be less, and still appear to be intellectual and even successful. It is intellectual and academic hypocrisy. Lowering the standards and encouraging people to see the higher values is not helpful whatsoever. When it comes to morality and some de-



## Dumbing Down of America

gree of spirituality, we have seen a huge shift in the way people think about the issues of right or wrong to the point that what used to be the wrong is now right. Let me give you some areas where you can see this clearly here in America.

For instance, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod. 20:13) is not only one of the Ten Commandments, but also a part of the fabric of our country and laws. Yet while the Bible presents this truth and focuses on life being a precious gift from God, in our world today that is not true. Taking another's life is okay. I'm not talking about just the action of a criminal or some street gangs, but all of us have accepted a new look at what life is and are willing to cross the line and provide for our social structure to have a place where life can be taken if we do not think that it is beneficial. If that is not true, we would not be having over one million abortions a year taking place in America. Life has value and it has a pre-

cious quality about it, unless it is inconvenient to us and we do not want that life to exist among us. In those cases, we destroy the life before it has opportunity to live, walk, sing, study among us. Abortion was, is, and will continue to be wrong even though the U.S. Supreme Court has said that it is right for a woman to have a choice of whether or not she wants to carry a baby to birth or not. It is still wrong. The Supreme Court is, in fact, overruled by the court of heaven.

Another area that is also going through a metamorphosis is drug and alcohol use in America. At one time it was illegal to possess, sell, or participate in drugs and alcohol use or sales — but no longer. In fact, in a world now filled with rehab facilities we provide for prescription drug use at a rate never before seen. We are faced with so many people who are addicted to drugs, while in their minds they're only taking their medicine.

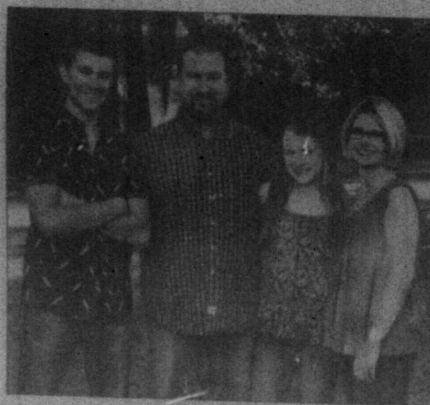
While the federal government still has laws and statutes against marijuana on the books, we've watched as some states have turned the drug into a fabric of their society. While alcohol used to be recognized as potentially dangerous if not deadly, when it comes to relationships and/or driving, it is more and more openly accepted and its possibilities are even presented from the pulpit of many of our churches.

A major area of change and dumbing down has to do with marriage. Marriage in Scripture is a covenant relationship between a man and a woman for a lifetime, but that is no longer the accepted definition. The standard today is much different — and much lower. Many people simply choose to live together without marriage. Cohabitation in America is seen by many as marriage without marriage. It's strange. They share the bills and the bed and play at living together, and some even convince themselves all that will help in the marriage and lessen divorce. Unfortunately, that has not been the reality.

God gave us a perfect plan and pattern for life and a type of relationship that would be beneficial both to us and to those in the marriage including the children to come, but obviously many think they know more than He does, only to find out there are huge problems created by lowering the standards and implementing the new plan. In every area, the high standards of God are not put in place for Him so much as for us. When He offers you the best and points to His way of implementing the controls in every area of life, pay attention to Him. It will be for your good and blessing and then indeed for His glory.

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

## Staff Changes



**WADE CHURCH, MOSS POINT**, has called Belinda Thornton as children's director. She comes with her husband Jeffery and children, Conner and Macy.



**BLUFF SPRINGS CHURCH, MAGNOLIA**, has called John Alexander as pastor. He is shown with his wife Kennedy and his children.

## Revivals & Homecomings

- **First Church, Steens:** A day of old time preaching, Oct. 28, 10 a.m. — 5 p.m.; lunch served; numerous speakers; Greg Renfrow, pastor.
- **Georgetown Church, Georgetown:** Homecoming, Oct. 29; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship lunch; Joseph Oster, speaker/in. team pastor; Alan Faler, music.
- **First Church, Potts Camp:** Homecoming, Oct. 29, beginning at 9 a.m.; meal after services; Herbert Luther, speaker; Andy Roe, music; Archie Goodwin, pastor; Doug Newell, music director.

## BIBL iO CIPHER

G R G U M E G Z A F G V Y L M D X

T G G S W L E F Y L L ; P F U D X L W F L P K Y

F G M E W U T K G D M E Y Y .

H L P S D L W Q M X - F W F Y ; T W O Y

Clue: M = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 5:31

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

## MSAudio LLC

Design & Integration of Professional Audio, Video, & Lighting  
Church, Conference Room, School  
Equipment sales, service and installation

**Trooper Hales**

[info@msaudiollc.com](mailto:info@msaudiollc.com)

P.O. Box 1575

Clinton, MS 39060

Ph 601-923-9947

Fax 601-924-2880



What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

October 26, 2017

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Communication Services**.

## Christian Action COMMISSION

### REGION 2 BANQUET

Thursday, November 9

Ray Dining Room  
Blue Mountain College

6:00 p.m.

Jim Futral

Speaker

Slater Murphy

Music

RSVP by November 2

### REGION 1 BANQUET

Thursday, November 16

First Baptist Church  
Grenada, MS

6:00 p.m.

Jim Futral

Speaker

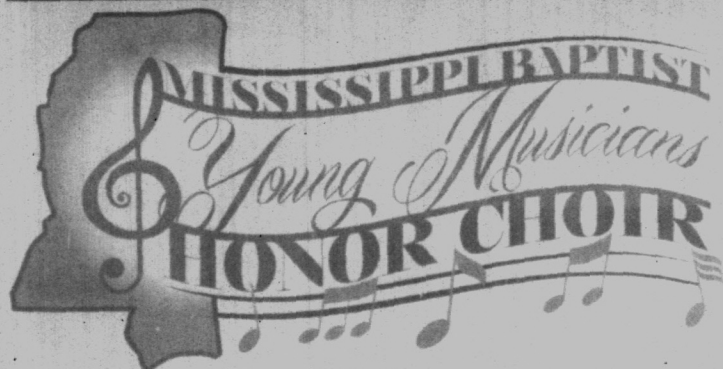
Slater Murphy

Music

RSVP by November 9

Kenny Digby, Executive Director-Treasurer  
Make reservations - call 601-292-3329

### Church Music



**Brandon Baptist Church, Brandon, MS**  
**April 21-22, 2018**

Video auditions will continue until the deadline:  
November 15, 2017

They may be submitted by: e-mail, snail mail, Dropbox or  
text. Inquiries should be directed to Wyndy South at  
601-292-3272 or [wsouth@mbcb.org](mailto:wsouth@mbcb.org)

### Pastor/Leadership Development

#### LIFEWAY/PASTOR DATE NIGHT

November 6 - Hattiesburg

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Temple Baptist Church

Register today! <http://lfwy.co/2v7Bdyf>

November 7 - Olive Branch

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

First Baptist Church

Register today! <http://lfwy.co/2FYInCc>

Child care is available on site, preregistration required.

FREE, but you must register!

Questions - contact Vesta Clary at 601-292-3305

### PASTOR/LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

#### MBCB BIVOCATIONAL MINISTRIES MEETING

Hosted by Michael Lee

Director of Pastor/Leadership Development

Monday, October 30, 2017

Baptist Building, Sky Room, 4th Floor  
3:00-4:30 p.m.

Please note: this meeting is open to anyone  
who is interested in bivocational ministries in the  
state. No registration required.

For more information, contact Vesta Clary at  
601-292-3305 or [vclary@mbcb.org](mailto:vclary@mbcb.org)

# Christian Action

COMMISSION

## CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The first Christian Leadership Institute will be conducted at Blue Mountain College on Monday - Friday, July 9-13, 2018.

The institute will equip and encourage high school young men to consider and pursue a life of public service.

The deadline for sponsorship is December 1.

Contact Rita McCollum at 601-292-3329 or [rmccollum@christianaction.com](mailto:rmccollum@christianaction.com) to submit a name.

## MINISTRY WIVES CONFERENCE

10-30-17  
FBC, JACKSON | 5th FLOOR

# Joy in the Journey

Register today at  
[TINYURL.COM/MWIVES2017](http://TINYURL.COM/MWIVES2017)

For more info, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at 601-292-3305 or [vcclary@mbcb.org](mailto:vcclary@mbcb.org)

## "I AM HERE, LORD!"

2018 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

Brandon Baptist Church, Brandon

January 28-29, 2018



For more information about the event, please contact the Evangelism Department at 601-292-3278 or [lburris@mbcb.org](mailto:lburris@mbcb.org)



## 2017 Youth Evangelism Challenge SHARING JESUS!

December 27-29 @ Mississippi College

For more information, contact the Youth Evangelism Department at 601-292-3305 or [lburris@mbcb.org](mailto:lburris@mbcb.org)



SPONSORED BY THE CHURCH MUSIC DEPARTMENT  
MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION BOARD  
A MINISTRY OF THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

# 2018 MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST AREA & STATE KEYBOARD FESTIVALS

JANUARY 25  
6:30 - 8:30 PM

AREA 2 ..... FBC, Tupelo  
AREA 2 ..... FBC, Starkville  
AREA 3 ..... FBC, Jackson  
AREA 4 ..... Poplar Springs Drive BC, Meridian  
AREA 5 ..... Main Street BC, Hattiesburg  
AREA 5 ..... FBC, Summit  
AREA 5 ..... FBC, Pascagoula  
AREA 5 ..... FBC, Laurel

JANUARY 26  
6:30 - 8:30 PM

AREA 1 ..... FBC, Senatobia

JANUARY 27  
9:30 AM - NOON

AREA 1 ..... Emmanuel BC, Grenada  
AREA 1 ..... North Greenwood BC, Greenwood

For more info, contact Wyndy South at  
601-292-3272 or [wsouth@mbcb.org](mailto:wsouth@mbcb.org)

WOMAN'S  
MISSIONARY UNION

## ARISE SHINE



WHEN WE RISE UP  
HE SHINES THROUGH

BAPTIST WOMEN'S  
WORLD DAY OF  
PRAYER

NOVEMBER 6, 2017

[http://www.bwawd.org/  
day-of-prayer](http://www.bwawd.org/day-of-prayer)

keeping your  
CHURCH  
**OUT**  
of court

Michael Leg, Pastor/Leadership Development Department director, is available to dialogue about legal issues or to lead meetings or conferences on site.

To purchase a notebook(s) for you or your church, please contact Vesta Clary in the P/LD Department at [vclary@mbcb.org](mailto:vclary@mbcb.org) or 601-292-3305.

Cost of notebook is \$10.

Produced by the Pastoral Leadership Development Department of the MBCH



SDA

2018

**ORDER YOUR NEW  
2018 PRAYER GUIDE  
TODAY!**

Contact the Cooperative Program/  
Stewardship Department  
[lleavell@mbcb.org](mailto:lleavell@mbcb.org) or 601-292-3347

Pray this day for...

October 27 - November 9, 2017

*"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."*

*Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)*

Pray for: **Aaron & Tiffany Epps**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through general evangelism & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Ronald & Bevan Holmes**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Shella Flowers**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through administration.

Pray for: **Daniel & Claudia Hood**, missionaries ministering to North African & Middle Eastern Peoples through general evangelism & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Clarence Frank & Phoebe Harrison**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for: **Millard Jones**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Kenneth & Kimberly Hathcock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Susan Jones**, missionary ministering to East Asian Peoples through student evangelism.

Pray for: **Earl & Ramona Hewitt**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through community/home medicine and church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Guy DeMars**, missionary ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through hospitality coordination.

Pray for: **Thomas & Kerri Dewett**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through general evangelism & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Cynthia Hodgins**, missionary ministering to Deaf Peoples through church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Jeffrey & Lissa Holman**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

**imb**

CHILDREN'S  
MISSIONS  
DAY™ 2018



## LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING®

February 17 is the 11th Annual Children's Missions Day! The theme is "Go Serve" and emphasizes the importance of serving all year long. The hope is to inspire children and entire congregations to continue to reach out to their communities with fun projects and activities as families realize just how easy it is to show each other God's love!

### HeartSong 2018 Registration

2018 HeartSong, the Youth Music and Worship Arts Camp  
June 16-30, 2018  
Southwest Mississippi Community College  
Summit, MS

For 6th - 12th Graders!

For more information, contact the Church Music Department at [cwtaylor@mbcb.org](mailto:cwtaylor@mbcb.org) or visit <http://www.mbcb.org/church-growth/church-music/heartsong/>

**HOUSE TOPS**



## College News



**BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE** recently hosted its Second Annual Jim Futral Invitational Golf Tournament here at historic Old Waverly Golf Course. The event, named for Mississippi Baptist Convention Executive Director-Treasurer and BMC alum Dr. Jim Futral, serves the ultimate purpose of raising funds to fully endow the Jim Futral Endowed Professorship in Biblical Studies and Proclamation at Blue Mountain College, assuring preparation of those who will share God's word for generations to come. According to the college, the event hosted 136 players in 29 teams, with total funds expected to range in the area of \$25,000. At last year's event, 98 players competed. Shown are (from left) President Barbara McMillin, Jim Futral, and Howard Miskelly.

## MS POSITIONS

**THE CALHOUN COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS.** All interested applicants should send a resume to: Calhoun County Baptist Association, Drawer S, Calhoun City, MS 38916-0914 / ATTENTION: PERSONNEL COMMITTEE. Deadline to apply is November 15th.

**TOPEKA BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH.** Send Resumes to: 824 China Grove Rd., Jayess, MS 39641 or brockdale4@bellsouth.net

**RED BANKS BAPTIST CHURCH IS PRAYFULLY SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR.** Please send resumes to Red Banks Baptist Church, P.O. Box 9, Red Banks, MS. 38661.

**ROCKY POINT BAPTIST CHURCH, CARTHAGE, MS, IN LEAKE COUNTY IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR FULL-TIME PASTOR.** Please send resumes to Dian Grundy, 3136 Rocky Point Rd, Carthage, Ms., 39051

**DREW BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR.** Please email resume to drewbaptistchurch@gmail.com or U S mail to Drew Baptist Church, 139 S Church St., Drew, MS 38737.

**UNITY BAPTIST CHURCH, MOSELLE, MISSISSIPPI IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER/DIRECTOR.** Send resumes to Unity Baptist Church, Youth Director Search Committee, P.O. Box 156, Moselle, Mississippi 39459.

## CLASSIFIEDS

**RETIRED PASTOR WHO LOVES TO PREACH SEEKS CHURCH FOR PULPIT SUPPLY OR BI-VOCATIONAL POSITION.** Size of church is unimportant and compensation is very flexible. Willing to travel up to 60 miles from Jackson. Please call James Blakely at 601-832-7930.

**NEW CHAPEL HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, WEST MONROE, LA SEEKING FULL TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER.** Send resumes to melinda@ncbhc.net

**SEEKING FULL-TIME YOUTH/FAMILY MINISTER.** Send resumes to melinda@ncbhc.net New Chapel Hill Baptist Church, West Monroe, LA 71291.

**GET THE BEST RATES ON:** Health Insurance and Medicare Supplements Call 1-800-541-8196 or visit [www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com](http://www.TurnerInsuranceOnline.com)

**WINDOW AND SCREEN SHOP** — windows and storm windows built to fit your opening. Plus new window screens and rescreen old screens. Call Tom Cook 601-709-4879.

**GATLINBURG RENTAL:** Cabin \$95/night. Contact: 832-922-0401 or Email: [pdw4760@aol.net](mailto:pdw4760@aol.net) for information and booking.

**STAINED GLASSWORKS, INC.,** serving MS & AL since 1992. Call 800-605-2970

**CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE ESTIMATES.** Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone 601-776-6617.

**WWW.SEBRENHOMEIMPROVEMENT.COM.** Christian owned Don & Rita Sebrén. 601-992-2092. All home improvements, siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

**PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE:** Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.). 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg. Deacon of Hardy Street Baptist Church. Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact him at 601-408-4908 or [bennyhornsby.com](mailto:bennyhornsby.com)

**HOPPER STAINED GLASS:** Custom windows, restoration and repairs, safety and insulated glass, custom aluminum and wood frames. Statewide 601-502-0202. [www.hoperglass.net](http://www.hoperglass.net)

# Church sets plans for local, international ministries

**RICHMOND, Va. (BP)** — A young Richmond, Va.-area church saw the effectiveness of the Cooperative Program (CP) this summer while helping a Central Asian village build water wells.

"The work is thrilling," said Cliff Jordan, a church planter and pastor of the eight-year-old Movement Church, where about 250 people attend Sunday morning worship.

Jordan appreciates International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries who laid the foundation for his mission team to arrive in the village and make a difference in a relatively short time, he told Baptist Press. "The folks (IMB sends) to the area line up the work, and work with the nationals who do the work."



JORDAN

Providing nearby access to water is both a relationship-building endeavor and a Gospel witness illustration, Jordan said. The economic boost to families there who help dig the wells adds to IMB's effective ministry, the pastor noted.

In what was their fifth trip to Central Asia, the church team saw again the benefits of CP, the Southern Baptist Convention's giving channel for missions and ministry, during a week with IMB and other Christian leaders there.

CP support paved the way for the advance of God's kingdom work by opening hearts of people who otherwise would be mistrustful of strangers to their land, Jordan said. "We have a large presence in Central Asia. We followed relationships and God has kept us there."

In the same way, Movement Church has a large and growing presence in the Richmond metropolitan area. It's a church organically built on relationships, whose members have allocated 10% to CP since the church's first Easter Sunday worship service in 2010.

"It's a baseline. That's what we tell our people," Jordan said. "Think of 10% as the floor, not the ceiling. We just believe we can do more together than we can do by ourselves. The few dollars become a lot of dollars when it's all pulled together."

Jordan and his wife April were students at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., when they were called to church planting. They began to pray for direction and determined they should work in a city rather than a small town or rural area "because of the influence of a city," Cliff said.

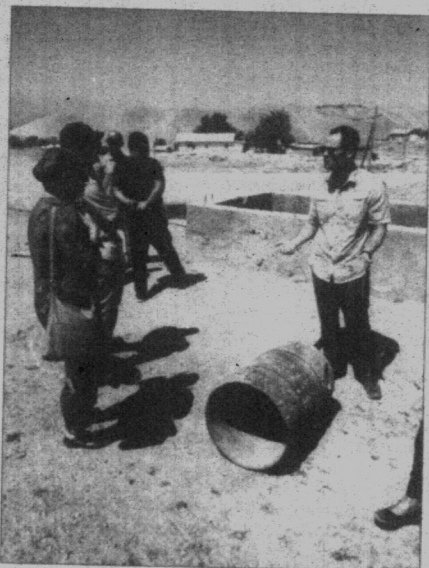
When Richmond was suggested Cliff initially thought there would be many Southern Baptist churches in the traditionally Southern city, but he learned that about 80% of Richmond is under-evangelized. Richmond is home to more than 223,000 people in the city and nearly 1.3 million in the greater metropolitan area.

"It was a great time to be planting a church," Cliff said. "We felt a synergy there with others who were there to plant churches. We were really thrilled to see the need and when that matched up with the calling, we never looked back."

Movement Church started in the summer of 2009 with six people meeting in the Jordans' living room, Cliff said. "We decided if anything's going to happen, we're going to have to live our lives on mission. Our relational lives began to spread, and once the snowball started going it grew..." "I've got a Bible study today with guys I met from basketball that first year."

As the group outgrew the Jordans' living room, Movement Church started a second Bible study led by co-planter Robby Christmas, who was with the church its first five years. The two men developed leaders "by recognizing people with leadership potential and pouring ourselves in them," Cliff said.

As they did so, the new leaders started additional Bible studies. "Early on we took the groups through our vision and our values, and went



**READY TO DIG** — A team from Movement Church in metropolitan Richmond, Va., traveled for the fifth time this summer to Central Asia, where they ministered alongside International Mission Board personnel and local Christian leaders to build water wells in the parched land. (BP/Submitted photo)

through Bible book studies," Cliff said. "When we went to having Sunday morning worship, we started having the community groups study extensions of the sermons."

For the last five years Movement Church has been meeting in leased warehouse space in a revitalized part of Richmond, but over the last 18 months the church had been looking for something larger. Concurrently, the withering Patterson Avenue Church, about a mile away was considering what to do with its aging property when it disbanded.

After many discussions originally orchestrated by leaders from the Baptist General Association of Virginia state convention, both churches agreed earlier this summer that Movement Church was to be given the disbanding church's property. Renovations will be costly but affordable, Cliff said, since the congregation won't have a mortgage.

"The whole relocation is going to allow us to get one step further down the road to our vision of planting churches around Richmond," Cliff said. "Everything is going to be based on what the mission is, what the need is... It's less about our vision than it is God's vision for our city."

The church has grown organically because "when people are captivated by the glory of Jesus, lives begin to change," he said. "It's the difference between trying to change behaviors, which affects the surface, and changing hearts from the inside out."

Grove Church (formerly Grove Avenue Church), a fellow Southern Baptist congregation in Richmond with Mark Becton as pastor, sent some of its members to help Movement for six months, Cliff said. Some of them stayed with the new congregation.

Today Movement Church has 16 community groups, each of which also take on mission projects in their area of the metro region. "Our people are our growth strategy," Cliff said. "We're putting all our eggs in that basket. We don't do marketing and big events. We grow organically."

"Mission is best fulfilled at its most local level, from the bottom up."

# Same judge strikes housing allowance — again

**MADISON, Wi. (BP and local reports)** — For the second time, U.S. District Judge Barbara Brandriff Crabb in Madison, Wi., has ruled the U.S. tax code's ministerial housing allowance is unconstitutional.



CRABB

Codified as part of a 1954 law, the ministerial housing allowance permits "ministers of the Gospel" to exclude for federal income tax purposes a portion or all of their gross income as a housing allowance.

The U.S. Internal Revenue Service has interpreted the law broadly to include religious workers of various faiths as "ministers of the Gospel." The benefit saves ministers an estimated \$800 million annually, according to Christianity Today.

In 2013, Crabb similarly ruled the ministerial housing allowance unconstitutional but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit in Chicago overturned her decision, ruling the plaintiffs — the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF), headquartered in Madison, Wi. — lacked standing to sue.

The FFRF is a plaintiff once again in the current lawsuit, arguing the IRS has violated the U.S. Constitution by refusing to permit the group's leaders to claim the ministerial housing allowance. This time, Crabb ruled in her 47-page opinion that FFRF and its leaders have satisfied the appeals court's requirements to attain legal standing.

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty in Washington D.C., a conservative nonprofit legal group that represents some defendants in the case, argues Crabb's ruling is in error.

O.S. Hawkins, president of Southern Baptists' GuideStone

Financial Resources in Dallas, agreed. "The housing allowance, far from being a government endorsement of religion, as Judge Crabb contends, actually removes government from the equation."



HAWKINS

"Were it not for the housing allowance, the government would be imposing a tax on religious employers and their employees that is not imposed on non-religious employers."

Hawkins said GuideStone will be filing a friend of the court brief supporting the ministerial housing allowance, at the appropriate time.

GuideStone advises ministers to consult GuideStone's annual tax guide, available at [GuideStone.org/taxguide](http://GuideStone.org/taxguide), and its housing allowance information, available at [GuideStone.org/housingallowance](http://GuideStone.org/housingallowance).

Crabb, an appointee of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, a Democrat, ruled in 2010 that the National Day of Prayer was unconstitutional. The National Day of Prayer went on as planned and the Seventh Circuit eventually overturned that ruling, too.

## Islamic terrorists blamed for deadly Somalia bombing

**MOGADISHU, Somalia (BP)** — Al-Shabaab Islamic terrorists are responsible for a truck bomb that killed at least 320 and injured more than 400 in Mogadishu, Somalia on Oct. 14, security officials have told the Guardian, a British newspaper.

While the al-Qaida affiliated group had not officially claimed responsibility, security officials said a man identifying with al-Shabaab was arrested hours after the blast as he tried to drive a second truck bomb into the city. He gave details of the attack that officials described as the deadliest worldwide in many years.

"This is the Somali 9/11," a security official told the Guardian. "The man we arrested has confessed. He is proud of what

he has done. He says it was for jihad."

In the bombing in Somalia's most populous city, a truck packed with military-grade and homemade explosives was detonated on a crowded downtown street, in turn igniting a fuel tanker parked nearby, the Guardian reported.

Witnesses described the area of devastation, hundreds of yards wide, as the size of "two or three football fields."

The death toll is expected to rise as the scale of the devastation becomes more apparent. Officials continued to unearth victims after the death toll was put at 320.

Many of the injured survivors were badly burned, some beyond

recognition, the Associated Press reported Oct. 16. Many corpses were burned to ashes, further complicating the body count, and nearly 70 were still missing as relatives searched for loved ones.

"One hundred and sixty of the bodies could not be recognized and so they were buried by the government. The others were buried by their relatives," the Guardian quoted Aden Nur, a doctor at a hospital treating survivors, as saying.

Somalian president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed declared three days of mourning in the nation where the vast majority of the 11.4 million residents are Muslim, most of them members of the Sunni sect. Civil war has raged in Somalia since 1991.

### Correction

Incorrect schedule and contact information for the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) annual meeting on Oct. 30 was listed on page six of the Oct. 19 issue of The Baptist Record. The correct schedule is 12 noon - 4:30 p.m. The correct contact is Tori Baldwin. The correct e-mail address is [tbaldwin@mbcb.org](mailto:tbaldwin@mbcb.org). The correct telephone numbers are (601) 292-3317 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 317. The Baptist Record regrets the errors. The WMU annual meeting will take place in the Chapel of First Church, Jackson.

### Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mbcb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mbcb.org).

## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



# His Presence • Exodus 39:42-43, 40:1-4, 34-38

As I prepared to write this final article on the closing chapters of Exodus, I found myself singing these words: "In your presence there is comfort, In your presence there is peace, When we seek the Father's heart, We will find such blessed assurance and ever open door, To know our Savior more, In the presence of the Lord." Those words are from the final verse from the song, "In His Presence", written by Sandi Patty. I can also hear the people of Israel singing a song about being in His presence (Psalm 84).

We began our study with Moses noticing a burning bush which was not consumed. Drawing closer, he was told to remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground in His presence. The people of Israel were guided by God's presence with a cloud by day and fire by night. Then in Chapter 34:29-35, after Moses had been in the LORD'S presence, his face radiated the glory of God. As we end the book of Exodus we will learn more about the power of His presence. But first we need to focus on the completion of the tabernacle.

All of the instructions Moses had received from the LORD regarding the construction of the tabernacle were implemented from Exodus 35:4 to 38:20. The

inventory of the tabernacle is described in 38:21-31. The construction of the priestly garments are detailed in 39:1-32. Finally the time came for the final inspection, 39:33-43. "So all the work for the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was finished. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD had commanded" (v. 32). In the last two chapters of Exodus, the phrase, "just as

the LORD had commanded Moses" is used 18 times. Obedience was paramount to accomplishing the work God had assigned. The same is true for us. After Moses had inspected and knew the work had been accomplished, he blessed them. Now, a year after they have left Egypt, the day had arrived to assemble the tabernacle (40:2). The Lord spoke to Moses and gave him the specific directions as to how everything was to be put, placed, and positioned (vs. 1-16). The tabernacle was

erected, every step completed, "Thus Moses finished the work (v.33, Ex 25:8-9).

Then the cloud covered the tent and "the glory (Shekinah) of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (v. 34). "Shekinah is a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning 'the one who dwells' and was used to describe the light on the mercy-seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies, the Shekinah

symbolized the Divine presence (Ex 25:8). Shekinah is not found in Scripture but the root word 'shaken' and the related word 'mishkan'

are both frequently used and both are associated with the presence of God (and His glory) dwelling with man. The meaning of the word Shekinah reminds us that we did not seek to dwell with God but He with us" (www.preceptsaustin.org/shekinah\_glor). Now go to the New Testament and read John 1:14-18. God so wanted to dwell with us, He sent His Son to dwell among us,

"and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (v. 14, NASB). For those who trust in Christ, we have been inhabited with the glory of God—His Presence. Turn to 1 Corinthians 3:16, "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (NASB).

His glory shown! No one was able to enter the tabernacle, not even Moses. God dwelt with His people for 50 days. When the cloud lifted (see Nu. 10:11) the people followed and when the cloud was not taken up they settled. God was in control, providing leadership to His people. Today, for those who are in Christ, God dwells. Furthermore we are called to: "Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you" (2 Tim 2:14 NASB).

Warren Wiersbe wrote, "Christians read the Bible and meditate on it, because when the child of God looks into the Word of God and sees the son of God, he or she is transformed by the Spirit of God into the image of God for the glory of God." Do you radiate His presence?

Leathers is a member of First Church, Madison.



Explore the Bible  
with Laura Leathers

# Ruth: All-In Commitment • Ruth 1:8-17

"Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me," Ruth 1:16-17 (KJV). In my mind right now, I can hear my boyhood pastor and mentor, Dr. John H. Parrott, reading these words at 2:25 PM, April 5, 1969. While Dr. Parrott's voice is very clear my visual memory is even clearer. I am looking deep into the loving eyes of my beautiful bride as her eyes confirm her total commitment to the words of this beautiful poem.

God in His loving grace has allowed me to read this love poem from the Old Testament at all of my children's weddings, my brothers' weddings, my sister's wedding, my sister-in-laws wedding, and many others. I am trying to put on paper some of the deep emotions that these two beautiful, poetic verses written nearly 4,000 years ago, stir in my heart. I even hope to help you, the reader, experience the deep feeling and emotion available in this part of God's inspired word. You may find inspiring words in songs and contemporary writings. But, I want us to look deeper into this passage because it

is part of God breathed, Holy Spirit protected revelation.

To really understand this passage in its fullest meaning, you need to read the entire book of Ruth. It is only 4 chapters long. One of the first things you will discover is the passage was not used in a wedding and in its initial setting was not spoken by a husband or wife. I still think it is appropriate for us to use at the founding of a new Christian family because it is about commitment in a family. Commitment that we see, weathered great hardship and brought enduring blessings to the family involved and to us today.

The setting and some of the main chapters of this short story are identified in the first verse: "During the time of the judges, there was a famine in the land. A man left Bethlehem in Judah with his wife and two sons to stay in the territory of Moab for a while," Ruth 1:1 (CSB). The man was Elimelech and his wife was Naomi, but Elimelech died early in the

story and Naomi is widowed. Within 10 years both of Naomi's sons married and died, leaving Naomi without her husband and her two sons. Ruth was Naomi's son, Mahlon's, widow.

Naomi heard it would be safe to return to Bethlehem. As Naomi began her return to Israel both widowed daughters-in-law joined her. But, Naomi encouraged them to stay with their mothers in Moab. Upon her insistence Orpah, the other daughter-in-law agrees to go back to Moab.

The Bible is clear in its commitment for Ruth's commitment to Naomi and her care. Let's take a

look at Ruth's list of what she was committing to. Remember this is clearly a family commitment. Ruth had become part of Naomi's family for life when she married Naomi's son Mahlon. Ruth and Mahlon's marriage ended when Mahlon died but that did not end the family connection between Naomi and Ruth. In verse 11 of chapter 1 Naomi gives us clear indication

of what she really considered her relationship with Ruth to be when she calls Ruth "my daughter."

Ruth ask Naomi, "Don't plead with me to abandon you," in Verse 16 (CSB). She said:

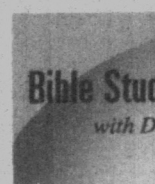
"wherever you go, I will go, wherever you live, I will live," (CSB) or in KJV, "and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: Your people will be my people," [note: Naomi was still Ruth's people even after the death of her husband]

"Your God will be my God." [We need not to forget the teaching of Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:14:

"Do not be unequally bound together with unbelievers [do not make mismatched alliance with them, inconsistent with your faith]. For what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and Belial (Satan)? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?" 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 (AMP).

Here is the result of Ruth's faithfulness: "An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David ... Salome fathered Boaz by Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered King David," Matthew 1:1-6 (CSB).

Hicks is Associational Missions Director for Jasper Association.



Bible Studies for Life  
with Don Hicks

## RELIEF

cont. from p.1

Mississippi Baptists have also spent their time witnessing to storm victims — 680 contacts reported — and leading at least six lost people to salvation in Jesus Christ, Gann said.

"The Mississippi Baptist volunteers who have accomplished all of this stand at 1,771 in the Oct.

19 report," Gann pointed out. Those number do not include Mississippi Baptists who volunteered in Florida, he added.

Gann said on October 22, Texas Baptist Men (TBM) will take over team coordination for the Orange, Texas, area and complete the cleanup work as well as begin the rebuilding ministry.

"Texas [Hurricane Harvey], Florida [Hurricane Irma], and

Puerto Rico [Hurricane Maria] will have rebuilding opportunities over the next year and perhaps beyond," Gann said. "As the transition from cleanup to rebuild moves forward, more information will be available soon on how to get plugged in with your church group."

If a Mississippi Baptist church is specifically interested in responding to Puerto Rico, sign-up can be accomplished at

sendrelief.org/disaster-relief/hurricane-response/. (Click on Caribbean Hurricane Response).

MBDR is supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program and the Margaret Lackey Offering for State Missions.

Financial donations are always needed to provide for specific supplies and other items that are necessary for response activities. Financial do-

nations may be given through MBDR and will go directly to support victim recovery in partnership with local Baptist churches and associations.

Donations may be made on-line at mbcb.org/giving/. Checks made payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, designated "Hurricane Relief" on the memo line, may be mailed to MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

## Just for the Record



**DUCK HILL CHURCH, DUCK HILL**, held a deacon ordination Oct. 1 for three new deacons. Shown are pastor Tim Buchanan, ordained deacons Colby Land, Elliot Fancher, and John Swanson, with youth and music leader Cole Pratt.



**FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN**, held a baby/parent dedication Sept. 10. Shown are pastor Jay Anderson, the Hodges with Simms Filerder; the Millers with Olivia Toler; and the Watsons with Mila James.



The children of **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, earned choir bucks for the choir store during practice for their annual Christmas program. They earn by donating to missions, attendance in church, and other ways.

### In other Church News:

► **New Henleyfield Church, Carriere**, is sponsoring a Fall fest Oct. 29, 4 - 6 p.m.

► **Ephesus Church, Forest**, is presenting Judgement House 2017 - Payback: When Revenge Turns to Ruin Oct. 28 - 29. First tour begins at 3 p.m. with tours running continuously until the last tour at 8 p.m. Advanced reservations are strongly encouraged for small and large groups; call (601) 988-7776 or 951-7708.

► **High Hill Church, Neshoba County**, is hosting a 5th Sunday night singing Oct. 29, 6 p.m., featuring The Wells Brothers. Don Cook, pastor; Mike Barker, music.



Southwest Mississippi Community College students Branson Blanton, Nick Kleppinger, Evan Busbin, and Treavor Davis debuted at **GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG**, as the Four the King southern gospel quartet.

## GC Challenge

### LIFE CHANGE.

The gospel is the most profound reality of life. The GC (Gospel Conversations) Challenge is an opportunity to join together as churches, associations and state conventions to pledge our commitment to having gospel conversations.

Go to **GCChallenge.com** to

MAKE THE PLEDGE

TELL YOUR STORY

DOWNLOAD THE PRAYER GUIDE

